

times, it is not surprising that Zola, who had long felt annoyed at seeing his books misinterpreted, should have ended "by complying with the clamour. Curiously enough, however, the very critics who had called on him for moral ejaculations, who had "begged for sermons, then became mightily indignant. « This man," they said, "has no imagination left; he does nothing but preach, his "books are as dull as ditch water. After all, we liked 'Eana' letter." Such was the result of Zola's change of manner, a result which might have been foreseen.

After his departure from England in 1893, the present writer remained without news of him for some weeks; "but in November he wrote that he had been ill and unable to attend to anything: the fact being that this was a critical time in connection with his domestic affairs.

Nevertheless he gave some attention to an opera which his friend M. Alfred Bruneau based on "L'Attaque du Moulin," the libretto being partly the work of M. Louis Gallet and partly that of Zola himself. The first performance took place at the Opéra Comique, then under M. Carvalho's management, on November 23, with a result gratifying to all concerned; and Zola afterwards turned to the writing of his novel, "Lourdes," which he intended to make the first of three volumes to be called "Les Trois Yilles," that is, Lourdes, Borne, and Paris.

The writing of those works was inspired by the trend of French literature and also of opinion in France at that time. A few years previously, on being interviewed on the question whether Naturalism were an expiring school or not, Zola had laughingly answered in the negative.¹ Never-

¹ «« J'Enquête sur l'Évolution Littéraire," by Jules Huret, Paris, 1891.